

Lincoln p. 738.
"Honors to the Flag."

ST. NICHOLAS

FOR-YOUNG-FOLKS

CONDUCTED BY
MARY-MAPES-DODGE



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THE-CENTURY-CO. · UNION-SQUARE · NEW-YORK

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As there may be some difficulty in making out parts of the old letter shown on page 737, here are the words in plain print:

October 7th, 1779.

DEAR SIR

I have lost — & cannot tell how — an old & favourite penknife & am much distressed for want of one — if you have any in your stores please to send me one — if you have not be so good as to get one immediately. — perhaps Mr. Bayley could furnish me. — one with two blades I should prefer where choice can be had.

I am D^r Sir

Y^r Most Obed^t

G. WASHINGTON.

Even so prudent and careful a man as General George Washington may lose a knife, as if he were the youngest boy in the Red School-house!

The General knew the value of a good knife, for he says it is "an old favourite," and that he is "much distressed for want of one." The army was not in active service just then, for the fighting was chiefly in the southern colonies; so the Commander-in-Chief probably needed his knife to mend his pens. Quill-pens were always wearing down, and had to be repointed; in-

deed, schoolmasters in those days were kept busy in mending their scholars' pens. I wonder if the boys did not sometimes blunt the pens on purpose when tired of writing.

You will notice that the picture shows the edges of the letter to have been scraped. This is because an inscription was once put on the letter saying that it was carried in a procession on Washington's Birthday, 1832 — a hundred years after his birth.

The letter was presented in 1837 by Robert Desilver, who was a stationer and publisher in Walnut street, Philadelphia, to Constant Guillou, who was a lawyer; and by him to Dr. Charles F. Guillou, assistant surgeon United States Navy, the present owner, April 16, 1889.

The owner of the letter believes that it was addressed to Major Gibbs, then paymaster to the Commander and his staff.

How little did General Washington, "much distressed" by the loss of his knife, dream of the pleasure the letter would give to nineteenth-century young folks! — among the rest to two little grandsons of the owner of the letter, who is now eighty-four years old.

AN ANECDOTE OF LINCOLN.

BY MARY LILLIAN HERR.

THE American people are so jealous of the fame of Washington that they have found in a hundred years but one worthy to stand beside him — the Martyr President, Abraham Lincoln.

Yet in many respects these two great Americans were strangely unlike, for Washington was trained according to English ideas of reserve and dignity; while Lincoln was a product of the frontier settlement, and accustomed to meet all men as having equal rights — and no more.

Here is a true story of Lincoln that shows

his simple cordiality and freedom from false dignity.

On his inaugural journey to Washington in 1861, the train stopped a little time in the town of Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Around the station a great crowd gathered, eager to see the new President. They shouted and cheered until Lincoln had to appear on the rear platform of his car. He bowed and smiled; but the crowd was so noisy he did not try to speak to them.

Very near to the platform stood a workman, wearing a red shirt and blue overalls, and carrying a dinner-pail. Like the rest he had stopped hoping to see Mr. Lincoln. The workman was almost a giant in size, and towered head and shoulders above the crowd.

No doubt he had heard that Lincoln also was very tall; and, encouraged by the friendly face, the workman suddenly waved his bare arm above his head, and called out:

"Hi, there, Abe Lincoln!—I'm taller than you—yes, a sight taller!"

This loud speech silenced the crowd by its boldness, and a laugh arose. But Mr. Lincoln, leaning forward with a good-humored smile, said quietly:

"My man, I doubt it; in fact, I'm sure I am the taller. However, come up, and let 's measure."

The crowd made way; the workman climbed to the platform, and stood back to back with the President-elect. Each put up a hand

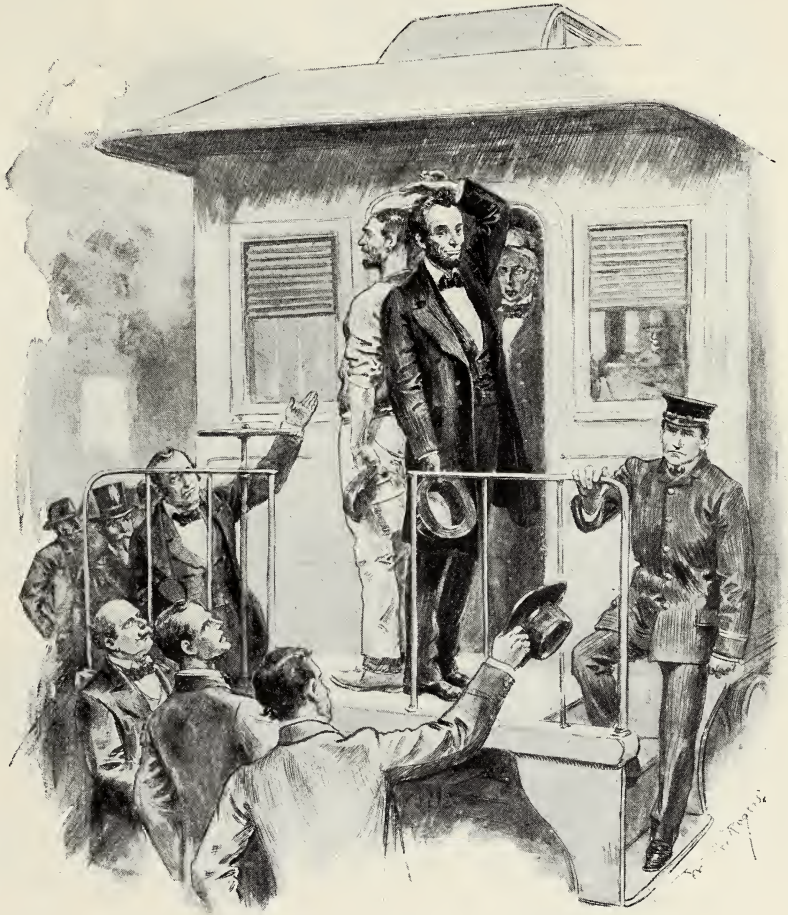
to see whose head overtopped. Evidently Mr. Lincoln was the victor; for with a smile of satisfaction, he turned and offered his hand to his beaten rival, saying cordially:

"I thought you were mistaken and I was right; but I wished to be sure and to have you satisfied. However, we are friends anyway, are n't we?"

Grasping the outstretched hand in a vigorous grip, the workman replied heartily:

"Yes, Abe Lincoln; as long as I live!"

No pretended familiarity could have won this reply. The man who was to proclaim freedom to the slaves felt himself the equal of any man—be it a great statesman or a private soldier.



"THE WORKMAN STOOD BACK TO BACK WITH THE PRESIDENT-ELECT."

He received the ambassador of a nation with no more embarrassment than he felt in measuring his height against the Allegheny workman; for he neither valued himself too much nor too little; and in the White House or on the frontier he always recognized the truth of Burns's oft quoted lines:

The rank is but the guinea's stamp—
A man 's a man for a' that.

